

**Summary Minutes**  
**NEW MEXICO RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**January 8-10, 2003**  
**Albuquerque**

**RAC Members Present:**

Crestina Trujillo Armstrong  
Larry Baker  
Dennis Braden  
William Buss  
Mike Eisenfeld  
John Hand  
Cliff Larsen  
Raye Miller  
Anthony Popp  
Jerry Ryburn  
Gretchen Sammis  
Joe Stell  
Robyn Tierney  
Don Tripp

**Designated Federal Official:**

Linda Rundell

**RAC Members Absent:**

Max Cordova

**BLM Staff:**

Bob Alexander, NMSO  
Steven Anderson, Albuquerque FO  
John Bristol, Albuquerque FO  
Steve Henke, Farmington FO  
Theresa Herrera, NMSO  
Ron Huntsinger, Taos FO  
Amy Lueders, Las Cruces FO  
Kate Padilla, Socorro FO  
Joan Resnick, NMSO  
Ed Roberson, Roswell FO  
Mary Jo Rugwell, Carlsbad FO  
Ed Singleton, Albuquerque FO  
Dwayne Sykes, NMSO  
Rich Whitley, NMSO

**Facilitator:**

Toby Herzlich

**Scribe:**

Karen Meadows

**JANUARY 8            FIELD TRIP**

The Albuquerque Field Office hosted a field trip to Placitas. RAC members present were: Robyn Tierney, Crestina Trujillo-Armstrong, Gretchen Sammis, Dennis Braden, Raye Miller and Son, Tony Popp, Cliff Larsen, Don Tripp, and Bill Buss. BLM attendees were: Linda Rundell, Bernie Chavez, Dwayne Sykes, Mike Jojola, Bruce Tatum, and Theresa Herrera. Steve Anderson and Bud Wilson, Albuquerque Field Office provided discussion on several issues: urban interface, Albuquerque Open Space Division property, sand and gravel pits, trespass horses, Santa Ana and San Felipe boundaries, electric transfer station, the road Diamond Tail (San Felipe land exchange) and Huertas Riparian area, cultural sites, and the need for the RMP amendment.

**JANUARY 9            RAC MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER, OPENING STATEMENTS & CHECK-IN FROM RAC MEMBERS**

Robyn opened the meeting and spoke about the new format planned—to develop work plans and models. Several experiences since the October RAC meeting, including the national RAC leadership meeting, led to the new approach.

Linda introduced herself, noting that she worked in the past with several RAC members. She has been with BLM for 24 years, worked in Farmington and Santa Fe, and considers NM home—so NM issues are very personal to her. She referred to the DOI's 4 C's—communication, cooperation, and

consultation—in the service of conservation and citizen-centered government. Linda said including and enfranchising communities must be an integral part of BLM process. Long-term problems include budget and personnel reductions, so her goal is to build staff numbers to better cover NM BLM lands. She hopes her Alaska experience with energy companies can help companies here do business in a way that leaves a lesser imprint. She also hopes to help government run better here. She meets with Diane Denish soon and they will discuss the governor's representative to the RAC.

A quorum was present. Rich said it had been an honor and pleasure to work with the RAC, and thanked members for their help and cooperation. Members recognized him with a round of applause; then introduced themselves and provided information about their interests and roles. Cliff voiced a desire to hear about issues of import before RAC meetings are convened, and displeasure that a detailed agenda concerning wilderness had been set at the last meeting and would not be followed.

#### **APPROVAL OF RAC MINUTES FROM CIMARRON OCTOBER 28-30, 2002 (Attachment 1)**

Changes were requested. On page 12 there was discussion about planting with wheat. That should be specified as Western Wheat Grass, not agronomic wheat. To the page 17 discussion on compliance in Farmington, add, "The question was raised about existing and older lease holdings and their status."

#### Motion

Tony moved approval of the minutes with changes. Crestina seconded. Motion approved by consensus.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Attachment 2)**

Robyn said six drafts of the agenda were reviewed and it became apparent that the wilderness piece did not fit. Pages 19-20 of the October minutes show it was suggested that the proposed topics provide a working agenda with flexibility. A visit to Cabezon would have been a mistake, since driving large vehicles through mud at this time of year affects roads and BLM resources. She took responsibility for the decision made to change the agenda, and would like more help on agendas and preparing for meetings in the future. The agenda presented was meant to determine where the RAC might head, and how to have input in BLM lands in NM and nationally. The new director and several new RAC members made this process timely.

FOs were asked to report on implementation of the *Roads & Trails Guidelines*.

#### **REPORT FROM RAC CHAIRS' MEETING, RAC DOWNLINK, AND COLLABORATIVE LAND USE PLANNING CONFERENCE**

##### **RAC Chairs' Meeting**

Robyn was impressed by the likenesses of the RACs in Western states. Most important to her were long conversations with attendees about making the RAC process more meaningful.

##### RAC leaders' interests included:

- The need to set performance standards for all activities on BLM lands. NM's *Standards & Guidelines for Rangeland Health* could be a tool for establishing performance standards.
- RACs reviewing major BLM initiatives well in advance of decision-making and public comment period.
- Opportunity to inform the public in a better way and bring them into the BLM process.
- The slow nomination and appointment process for new RAC members delays and diminishes public interest. Robyn urged members to think now about nominees for the coming Spring.
- RACs as facilitators of community collaborative processes—for example, arranging workshops for analysis of environmental impact and planning.

- AZ RAC has established subcommittee authorization through its charter, acting as advisors throughout EAs, data collection and alternatives that will be an integral part of BLM planning.
- Many states have established standards for OHV use, but none have been implemented, often because funds are not available. Revisit the issue of charging fees for recreational use.
- Subcommittees and RACs participate in Pinon-Juniper (P-J) control and writing guidelines for management. Changes in P-J forests are happening broadly in the West because of drought and will have profound effects on both watersheds and fuels control.
- May consider establishing a subcommittee for addressing the Lesser Prairie Chicken. (Attachment 3)
- Not enough guidance from BLM, for example, what forms of assistance? Not enough meetings.
- No clear planning for future. RACs need something to look forward to and think about. Need to keep lines of communication open—newsletters, questionnaires, etc.
- Education and outreach on noxious weeds—reaching crisis proportions in parts of the country—may change the way we manage lands.
- Involvement on new MCAs. Could hold workshops during public comment periods.
- Northern states have great concern about coal bed methane development in wilderness.
- The NM RAC charter is up for review in Washington this year. Need to get on track now to assure that it says what we want it to say.
- Unanimous belief that our meeting environments are not ideal for public participation.

#### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- It takes an emergency to get public input.
- Tony's committee is working on alternatives to enhance public input. Best way to get groups involved is at FO level.
- This RAC does not meet often or communicate well between meetings. We're volunteers—it may not be realistic to ask more, for example more involvement at community level.
- We are advisory, not micro-managers. We come from special interests and have influence, so we can lobby.
- People need tangible products.

#### **Land-Use Conference in Tucson**

Robyn reiterated discussion from the last day of the conference, summed up in a keynote speech by history professor Hal Rothman, who wrote a book called *Devil's Bargains* about redistribution of natural resources from agriculture to recreation—and how that changes economies and communities. As a result, we need to become active rather than passive citizens. Traditionally in land use planning there has been only one opportunity for input, reinforcing passivity. It is time to find new ways to meet and opportunities to think about the larger good. We are incorporating a new horizontal form of social hierarchies and shared leadership. Our thinking and action need to be more holistic.

#### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- This was the first conference of its kind, a joint effort developed by BLM, universities, counties, military representatives and others.

#### **Ruidoso November Meeting on Otero Mesa (Attachment 4)**

BLM, O&G, a RAC subcommittee, and all stakeholders discussed the final amended alternative, and brought closure to the proposed mediation process. Not all stakeholders are happy, but Robyn congratulated Amy Lueders on the results, and read the stipulation. Amy thanked the RAC for its input and subcommittee involvement.

## **December 18 Public Meeting at Bernalillo Sheriff's Office**

The meeting was called by the NM Wilderness Alliance (NMWA) in response to the proposal on the Cabezón Wilderness; and a group of citizens proposed their alternative to the NMWA proposal. Approximately 100 people attended, showing the advantage of having public comment periods at night (which the RAC has considered). An *Albuquerque Journal* article also brought attention to Cabezón Wilderness issues.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- Significant public comment was expected the following day, and the RAC had no background on this topic.
- Ed Singleton said his advice on the Cabezón Wilderness Proposal to the NM Wilderness Alliance (NMWA) was to meet people on the ground, run field trips, and inform the public. Instead, NMWA went to Washington, DC. NMWA leadership changed, BLM repeated its recommendation, and NMWA went to the national level again.
- This is an opportunity for RAC to bring both sides to the table for discussion. We could ask those making comment to propose people who should be around the table for such a gathering.
- Reiterated that we will be hearing public comment out of context; further discussion on changing the agenda to address the Cabezón WSA and wilderness issues.
- This may already be like Otero Mesa, where factions have polarized. Whether or not they ever agree, we can provide opportunity for expression of opinions, and potentially, other options.
- RAC could form a subcommittee that includes representatives of the differing sides to bring a proposal to the table.
- WSAs are in limbo until national leadership makes decisions. The impact on BLM is that protest appeals to any proposed activity in WSAs can be filed.
- There is debate in Washington legal circles over what to do with citizen proposals. State BLM offices are still waiting for policy. RAC could make a recommendation that a policy be finalized.
- It was proposed that BLM staff provide appropriate background, a map and legal framework before public comment.

## **COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING & STEWARDSHIP**

Joan Resnick provided BLM perspective on how collaboration and community based planning have been accomplished. She said there's no shared meaning for those terms so even definition needs discussion. BLM has been working in collaboration, with differing experiences, barriers and realities. Joan facilitates, provides tools and guidance, and works with FOs to incorporate collaboration.

Steve Henke commented on results of community participation in Farmington. The FO launched a land-use planning effort two years ago and contracted with a consultant who interviewed citizens in their homes and workplaces and summarized findings. The community was surprisingly supportive of O&G, although concerned about environmental impact. There were conflicts between ranchers and O&G representatives, and as a result of the consultant's report the FO helped several interest groups form and interact. It would have been best to start before the plan, but he felt good about the consensus reached. Livestock hazards have been reduced, and reclamation of O&G sites is progressing. OHVs are an issue, so 13 road management units were set, with opportunity for agreement on their use. He advised that collaborative efforts start early, be issue-driven and ripe for resolution, and that results be honored by BLM. The networking process is valuable for focusing efforts. Some of the outspoken citizens who commented at the RAC Farmington meeting are involved in these groups. Change is happening, although the pace of change is not always appreciated.

### Question/Answer/Comment

- Farmington FO is in final stages of comment analysis with the final document to be completed by mid-March.
- The mitigation fund stands at \$65,000. A working group requested that the community of ranchers make recommendations on its use. Recent negative media coverage has affected donations.

Joan said another result of collaboration is that people become more confident and trusting. The land-planning meeting in Tucson included travel scholarships to encourage participation, with sponsorship providing funding that BLM did not have. Notes from that meeting are available by request.

Congress and national BLM administration expect completion of certain plans on time, so there may be no support for changing timelines. Yet their timelines may not be in synch with other agencies or with communities. The barriers are real and have to be worked on case by case.

Kate said her background is in collaboration and public involvement so when she faced her first EIS on the Malpais, she found John Hand and started talking. “Don’t expect the public to come to you,” she said, “Go to them.” Citizen-driven conferences for collaboration have been primary. Urban interface and OHV issues are shared by the county, so they attend each other’s planning meetings. Don Tripp said it was helpful to get numerical projections, which are available on the Internet.

“When we look at data together we can discuss discrepancies,” Joan said. Recommended tools include the *Collaborative Land Use Planning Guide*, a gathering of best practices and examples.

### Question/Answer/Comment

- The Sonoran Institute’s Economic Profiles software program is available.
- Socorro FO is offering a series of community-based workshops in partnership with the National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils, meant to build trust and capacity for working together. The workshops have presented both an opportunity and a venue for finding people interested in this process. (Attachment 5)
- Phoenix FO has a RAC subcommittee that has hosted meetings, and is developing an expanded public involvement process. A Montana RAC subcommittee is working on land use planning. An Oregon RAC held public workshops and facilitated public involvement.
- Joan mentioned the *opportunities* of the FACA Charter, which assures that BLM will not be “overly influenced” by RACs. They participate but do not drive the process. Meetings are published in the Federal Register and are open to the public. A limited number of FACA charters are given out and the application process is lengthy.

## **WHAT IS THE RAC WORKING TOWARD?**

### **Small groups considered:**

- What would we like to see in place in 5-10 years as a result of our work?
  - What would “productive harmony” look like?
  - How would things be managed differently?
  - How would relationships be different?
- What is important for the RAC to focus on to provide input for BLM?

### **Results:**

Collaboration-derived Performance Standards	Collaboration, cooperation w/public—regular/thorough	Land decisions based on highest/best use	Engage public in land use priorities	Complementary roles: BLM & RAC

Achieve compliance w/standards	Identify and recruit leaders	Land condition driven by biology	Simple NEPA process	Process consistency among BLM offices, with accountability
Performance standards for other activities	More local involvement	Shift from multi-use to highest & best use	Citizen-based alternatives—framework for?	Define a balance among presentations & issue work
Establish consistent standards for activities	Public enlightened & involved	Improved land health		RAC has focus (clear objectives & closure)
Data sharing/utilization of public/BLM	BLM & public trust each other	Conservation areas v. wilderness areas		RAC has active subgroups
	No surprises	Identify urbanization problems—loss of rangeland		RAC needs more public voice
		Tenure adjustment—want more consolidation		Local RAC reps work closely with FOs

These appear to be a set of operating principles to guide what the RAC and BLM do. How might they become a work plan? Can we come up with issues and solutions that are proactive and identify future issues arising? How might issues be approached in the context of the columns above?

Subcommittees announced meeting times and places for that evening.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE RAC AND ITS MEMBERS?

- Engage local communities at home and work, for example, public meetings in neighborhoods to talk about trespassing, trash, OHVs, etc.
- Members gather information about their parts of the state to bring to the RAC, and help BLM address issues creatively.
- Model cooperation, interaction, and debate. Draw a broader audience. Offer neutral territory for opposing sides.
- RAC is public involvement, a place for BLM to bring up issues, because RAC members represent all sides. Whether in consensus or not we give value for BLM, and are a forum for broader public involvement.
- We are a microcosm for issues. We educate and are educated—and pass along that knowledge.
- RAC expresses the span of possibilities, bracketing issues.
- All RACs are casting about to find roles. NM RAC's past role was establishing *Standards & Guidelines for Rangeland Health*. At best, we represent a millennium of age providing sage wisdom.
- RAC is a sounding board with imagination and passion engaged, gets issues on the table, encourages debate.
- Talking about goals is getting us nowhere. We need results. The RAC should look at broader issues and have concrete results, for example, suggestions for policy, or prodding managers or Washington to get done what needs to be done.
- What we do doesn't always translate into something useful. Are BLM and RAC on the same or opposite sides? Is RAC only generating more work?
- Need to be effective. Need to understand the process very well in order to make suggestions.
- Need to know more about the RMP process so we can help change the course of that track.
- Things are happening rapidly to change public land use, for example, coal bed methane was not even mentioned in the 1980s RMP.
- Some issues question the very assumptions at the basis of BLM management.

- People are disappointed when there isn't a reasonable range of alternatives.
- BLM is in a shift that's incomplete—to involve the public in developing alternatives. The intention is to broaden the middle, shifting away from the extremes. RAC can help make the process user-friendly.
- Consider where we want to wind up. Working together before putting it down on paper brings broader agreement.
- Start earlier. Nominate new RAC members from Southeast NM who can help the Carlsbad 2004 RMPA go a different way.
- RAC members involved in RMPAQ process could help craft new ways.
- Remember the basic motivation for the RMP process. There are reasons why certain plans are set for amendment. That could be a basis for subcommittees.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE WORKSHOP**

### **Identification of Strategic Issues**

#### **How to Achieve the Desired Future**

#### **Energy Subcommittee**

- How can RAC mitigate blowups (polarized issues like Otero Mesa that we can't solve) in RMP process? Primarily Farmington-specific discussion but could be applied to Carlsbad and others. Hope to achieve community-based working group to serve a broader education role.
- Set secondary/tertiary recovery as a standard. What about compressors, roads, fragmentation? Depends on the area and how far along O&G development is. Need to educate public to understand what has been done and considered.
- Nature of RMP process and some very difficult allocation issues may not be suitable for attempting consensus.

#### **Rangelands Subcommittee**

- BLM should bring the RAC 1-2 issues to work on, not the other way around.
- Issues intertwine and should be addressed concurrently.
- Pinon-juniper is a problem that needs addressing. The RAC could expedite clearing.
  - Let some permittees clear dead trees from BLM land.
  - Support paraprofessionals for archaeological clearance.
- Noxious weeds
- Beetle infestation
- Fuel treatment/forest thinning
- Contracting EAs
- Statewide plan to expedite implementation

#### **Urban Interface/Community Involvement Subcommittee**

- Public involvement needed in three areas:
  - RMP process
  - General involvement over time
  - Role of RAC
- RAC convenes subcommittees. Need to see where help is needed to avoid contentiousness in process.

### Other Issues to Build into 1-2 Year Work Plan

- Access to public lands is becoming a battleground, particularly during hunting season. RAC could facilitate discussion, help BLM know what to do on the ground.
- Watershed restoration, water quality determinations are new litigation ground. Need to be proactive.
- Cabezon Wilderness should be dealt with, as well as upcoming NMWA proposal that includes surrounding areas.
- Learn about and discuss alternative energy.
- RAC is invited to take part in BLM/USFS/Forest Guardians/Audubon Society prairie chicken working group's facilitated meetings.
- RAC is invited to propose policy on RMP involvement, with guidelines that can be distributed. Socorro RMP is currently being scoped and numerous alternatives are anticipated as part of the process. However, no criteria or guidelines for how or what will be accepted. What kind of process can BLM use to pull people together so the community can pare down alternatives? Needs to be done well so people feel they've been part of the process.
- Rich is working in Washington in February on partnering and collaboration issues. NM RAC could develop a framework that he would use in helping develop national policy.
- RAC can advocate for positive response to BLM implementation of policies.
- Help BLM think of alternative forms of revenue.
- RAC could help prioritize and identify O&G compliance with mitigation.
  - There are levels of compliance, from lack of signage to fencing that affects archaeological sites.
  - Is mitigation complied with, and is it effective?
  - Use a third party for assessment?
- Monitoring is essential.

Issues were clarified and some combined. Members prioritized them, and subcommittees were asked to consider the prioritized issues in their meetings that evening—considering time frame, systems affected, resources needed, approach to take, etc.

### Priorities were:

- RMP Process
  - Citizen alternative submission
  - Public involvement
  - Mitigating blowups
- Watershed Restoration/Water Quality
- Range Issues
- BLM requests for RAC advice
- Cabezon Wilderness
- Access issues
- Monitoring & compliance

It was proposed that with active subcommittees, the number of RAC meetings be lowered, because subcommittee results may cut down what RAC needs to do. Ed Roberson recommended reading *Using Social Ecology to Meet the Productive Harmony Intent of the National Environmental Policy Act*, particularly the discussion on page 6. (Attachment 6)

### **JANUARY 10            RAC MEETING**

Robyn reconvened the meeting and noted addition to the agenda of BLM staff presentations on wilderness and WSAs to inform the RAC before the public comment period.



## **REPORT ON CONTACT WITH OTHER RACS**

Crestina has contacted other RACS, and had talks thus far with the CO Front Range (CO has three RACS) and AZ RACs. AZ too is working with bringing land use management plans up to date. Its biggest problem is wild horses and burros. AZ RAC sends out a newsletter to more than 1,200, does public relations, and has a website. The CO RAC is working on OHV guidelines and wilderness issues; and thought Western RACs would benefit by communicating, but don't need to meet.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- AZ expressed interest in interaction with other RACS in *Partners across the West*, proceedings of the RAC videoconference in November 2002.
- Robyn found it very helpful to meet with other RAC leaders at the conference she attended, and was surprised by their common issues. She has a set of RAC leader bios and summary of their RAC's work, which will be available through Theresa Herrera.
- There was general interest in meetings and exchanges, including documents like our guidelines.
- Agendas should include time for reports on interaction with other RACs.
- There is communication between all state BLM offices and their RACs. And there is consistency in policies that means NM guidelines might have broader application.

## **REVIEW OF FIRST DAY'S WORK**

The intention had been to come out with a work plan by end of day. Cliff asked that new members receive copies of the March 2002 *Roads & Trails Guidelines*. Only one of the FOs reporting in writing referred to that issue. Some managers meant to cover it in dialogue, and some said changes depend on completion of RMPs.

## **WSA PROCESS & CABEZON (Attachment 7)**

Dwayne Sykes distributed a 1992 map of actual and proposed NM wilderness areas, and the 1991 *New Mexico Wilderness Study Report* to Washington, resulting from a 14-year study. In 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act, which applied to national parks, forests and wildlife. In 1966, BLM was brought into wilderness management, and had to inventory its lands for potential wilderness. FLPMA in 1976 gave states 15 years to report to Congress. In 1980, NM published a WSA decision. The statewide EIA was begun in 1982, and in 1988 BLM issued a final EIS on NM WSAs. Of one million acres of potential WSAs on BLM land (1/12<sup>th</sup> of the total), about half (486,000) were recommended as suitable for wilderness designation—5,000 or more acre tracts deemed natural, untrammeled, roadless, with opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation, and manageable in the long term as wilderness. In 1990 the NM BLM report went to Congress, where it has languished. Although Senator Domenici attempted in 1997 to gain consensus for wilderness designations, all of the proposed acres remain WSAs. That status has suspended leasing since the mid-1980s, and does not allow any new action that would cause surface disturbance. Grazing is considered acceptable use.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- RS2477 (about 1870) predates FLPMA, and says any federal land inappropriate for wilderness is available for trails and highways—meaning public entities can build roads where they need to. That is currently not being acted upon.
- There was a great deal of public involvement in earlier days of this process. Wilderness interests watch the WSAs closely. NMWA recently completed its own inventory and recommended that 3-3 1/2 million NM acres be designated wilderness, mostly in the Las Cruces area, including Otero Mesa. The Cattlegrowers Association, Farm Bureau, etc., are now becoming involved. Next phase is to get the NM Congressional delegation to take action, which will open public comment.

- Two years ago there was interest in piece-mealing wilderness. BLM suggested a grassroots approach, but the NMWA chose to start in Washington, which was not appreciated by the Congressional delegation. Recently, NMWA leadership has indicated a change in policy.

John Bristol pointed out the Cabezon WSA on the map with five nearby WSAs and landmarks. What happens here will happen in many other areas of NM. Cabezon has become of high interest, and Cattlegrowers are now getting involved.

In its attempts to set aside more wilderness areas, NMWA is initiating a 9,000-acre state land exchange and a possible Zia Pueblo exchange. Willing private landowners are being approached, primarily surrounding the WSA. There is a national budget for such purchases.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- Will the Ojito region have public access? Not known. That is Zia Pueblo land.
- There are bladed maintained roads in WSAs. Is there access to checkerboard areas? Yes, BLM is working with access issues.
- NMWA is looking at USFS exchanges to extend WSA acreage. BLM will go through the determination process with acquired lands proposed. A 2001 handbook provides some guidance for such studies. If those lands qualify, they will be brought into the land use planning process. The public will then be involved, and issues like watershed, grazing, etc. considered.
- Congress can adjust acreage and change boundaries when designating wilderness.
- The proposed Zia land exchange would result in more pueblo land, a “collar” around the Ojito area. It would be signed and patrolled, so no OHV problem.
- OHV usage around Albuquerque is increasing, and areas traditionally used are being closed, so Ed Singleton asked for ideas on where to designate OHV areas.
- Wilderness areas and WSAs are not cheap to manage. Statewide budget for wilderness is \$900,000. Biggest problem is lack of staff. Volunteers make a difference.
- Wilderness and WSA designation in recent years have rarely changed, and are revisited during RMPAs only if they come up as an issue.
- Is there interest in coal bed methane in the Cabezon area? USGS and Bureau of Mines did studies and found little potential.
- Do the ranching community and Sandoval County Commission object to this WSA? There’s always some concern, especially about management particulars.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

The Public Comment Period was opened at 10 a.m.

### **Elizabeth C. Johnson, Rancher, Sandoval County Commission, Cabezon Water Pipeline Association, San Ysidro**

She is in opposition to the Cabezon Wilderness proposal, and represented a number of people who met recently. We are all the public. Solitude is available without going through wilderness designation. A resolution by 100 citizens in 2002 opposed wilderness designation for the areas under discussion, except the Ojito. Sandoval County is 85% restricted as is. The Cabezon area is wilderness because of its terrain, whether designated or not, and to designate it segregates those who are older or disabled. Wells and pipelines need maintenance. Her group has asked the Washington delegation to release these WSAs.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- Zia Pueblo already owns much of the land surrounding Ojito.

- Ranchers do go in to maintain wells and pipelines, and are not sure what these designations legislate. However, motorized equipment is not allowed, for example, backhoes and rescue helicopters.
- Are there any advantages to wilderness for current users? In Ladron area, many felt it helped protect ranchers. Cabezon has not suffered public vandalism. It is thought that wilderness would exclude ranchers. There are no other economic opportunities.

### **R.W. Johnson, Rancher, San Ysidro**

He served 20 years on the County Commission, and is concerned that this area represented on the map BLM provided is the only unrestricted area of Sandoval County. Tribal and federal lands surround it. The WSA doesn't qualify as wilderness because there are maintained roads. The four separate proposed areas support that statement. If Cabezon becomes a wilderness he thinks they will be combined and further pressure will be applied to remaining open lands. Locals have had no economic benefit. It's a forest fire waiting to happen. There's no management. Irrigation ditches don't run. Power saws for clearing are not allowed. WSAs have been neglected since designated. Can't build bridges, move rocks, etc. He wants this area released so BLM can properly manage it and the public is welcome.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- Please show on the map the 85% restricted area. He pointed out the Santa Fe National Forest, Jemez Springs recreation area, Valle Caldera, and Tent Rocks, all with restrictions.
- Wilderness will draw more people in.

### **Restic Sandoval, Rancher, Charter Member of BLM Watershed Committee, Bernalillo**

He was born and raised in Cabezon. This wilderness will impact the whole community all the way to southern NM and TX because the Rio Puerco runs through it. Ninety percent of the silt in Elephant Butte Reservoir comes from the Rio Puerco. If Cabezon becomes wilderness, we won't be able to do anything about that. It will get small ranchers out of there. He didn't trust the people handling this. He didn't see a familiar face. The little guy defends the country. What did they die for? We already abide by BLM restrictions. Less than 1% of Americans use wilderness. Locals have a way of life, a culture. This is forcing the little man out. NMWA says they'll sponsor opportunities like youth groups if people help them establish wilderness. That's blackmail.

### **Helen Sandoval, Bernalillo, Cabezon**

This is discrimination—I can't walk into wilderness. We're gearing up for the young and able. Consider everybody. This WSA will impact the current roads, as walkers drive to the area. What are we doing this for? National Parks already can't afford upkeep, so how will wilderness areas be managed? Bring in seniors and disabled people and ask how they feel about WSAs. Tribes say it's the seniors who use their lands and keep them going.

### **Jim Scarantino, Chair of Coalition for NM Wilderness, Albuquerque**

Statewide organizations and businesses include ranchers, for example, Sierra County Economic Development. They funded a poll that showed most New Mexicans think more of NM is wilderness than actually is—only 2%. Two thirds polled want more wilderness, even in Sandoval County. He will send copies of poll results to RAC. He thanked Commissioner Johnson for support getting the Congressional delegation to designate Ojito as wilderness, with the Zia Pueblo collar. A waiver of sovereign immunity was signed, so Zia Pueblo must preserve it as open space, open to the public, only for grazing and nutritional culture. It was a win/win and fits the Four C's. He does support designation of the remaining four areas, and hopes the Wilderness Coalition will go about things differently from wilderness groups in the past. For example, establish a work group to educate the public about

economic development related with wilderness. The Wilderness Coalition met with San Luis people in a bar, not the best situation, and it was very contentious. He hopes for better. The proposal would not close county roads and would exempt and protect waterlines. He encouraged people to collaborate and share information. The Rio Puerco needs attention, so we might establish a national conservation area as a bigger package to provide infrastructure or reclamation where needed.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- It is not true that local residents were excluded from the recent Cuba school meeting.
- The Sandoval County poll was not specifically about Cabezon. Not sure whether most polled were city people. The people immediately affected are not city people.
- Propose that Ojito continue to be BLM wilderness area, with the collar of 13,000 acres in trust and managed by Zia Pueblo as open space excluding OHV use.
- RAC would like to receive economic studies referred to by Mr. Scarantino. A packet will be sent to Theresa Herrera for distribution. There has not been a study for this particular area. RAC also wants a copy of the actual proposal. Mr. Scarantino said it is just a beginning—for example, roads in the whole area need work.

### **Arturo Sandoval, Native New Mexican, Land Grant Heir, Conservationist, Consultant for Coalition for NM Wilderness, Albuquerque**

His grandparents were ranchers and grandfather worked for BLM. He noted the connection between how we use public lands and the economic health of communities. Wants to figure out ways to help communities retain sustainable economic opportunity—his concern for Cabezon. There is sustainable economic development when lands are created as wilderness. Wilderness areas are the United States' cathedrals. Hopes we can collaborate to make federal lands work for communities. McKinley County passed a unanimous resolution in favor of Cabezon Wilderness (about half of the area proposed is in McKinley County). They want to organize tours and gain attention to bring people in. Economic studies and experience show that it can be done. Silver City, for example, has gained considerably from nearby wilderness areas. How can we resonate them back to local communities? Forty ranchers benefit from the current Cabezon design; more can be benefited.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- What exactly did McKinley County Commission support? The approximately 250,000 acres that the NMWA designated.

### **Ernest R. Torrez, Cattle Grower, La Jara**

Restricted land to him is reflected in the proportion of private/nonprivate. In the West, military and sovereign lands are included. If 2% of NM land is designated wilderness, that may be enough in combination with other public lands. One speaker mentioned "only 40 ranchers," but he's related to 24 of them, and they're people. We can't separate people from the land. Get real about economics, this country is nothing without water rights. Drought and elk are eating cattle forage. Don't rush into this thing. It affects a rural culture that will be inhibited by designating large chunks of land as wilderness. History has weight.

### **Question/Answer/Comment**

- Would you agree that wilderness areas help sustain history and culture? No. What would have happened in Cuba if that hadn't become wilderness? He herded sheep there as a kid and now it's waiting for a forest fire. Do you think others share your opinions? Yes, there is concern about more restrictions on any public land. Revolutionary spirit is alive and well in Northern NM.

- Did the elk graze on your allotment? Yes, and the permittees got letters about pulling cows out, which he and others had done anyway. Rains brought plant growth and elk smelled it (in Valle San Ysidro area near Jicarilla). Can NMDG&F help? They don't believe there are that many elk out there. But elk are encroaching on former mule deer habitat. BLM could gather data when in the field and alert NMDG&F. We can't save grazing land by removing cattle when elk are destroying it anyway.
- O&G gets to drill thousands of holes. How come I can't drill for cattle and wildlife?

**Jessica Pope, Executive Director of NM Wilderness Alliance, Albuquerque**

NMWA is part of the NM Coalition for Wilderness, and she is a board member. They have had 3,000 members in NM since 1997, and their primary purpose is preservation of wild lands. NMWA is now engaged in a 3-year process to catalogue all BLM lands and help determine what qualifies as wilderness. They hope to have a report in the Spring; and will have public meetings to share findings. The intended result is more wilderness areas in NM. She paraphrased a Lyndon B. Johnson quote—we hope to bring to the future land as it was created, not as we have changed it.

**Charlotte Mitchell, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau, Jemez Pueblo**

Spanish American people in this area have been maligned by society and government, because a lot of Sandoval County land was roped out of land grants, taken by Congressional Bill to be given to Indian tribes. And ranchers had to give up leases. Those people have been hurt. For 20 years residents of the Cabezón area have tried to develop water sources, are finally getting that project working, and the BLM says they will not be able to develop water if this becomes wilderness. When Cabezón was made a WSA, none of the people represented here were involved or had input. The newspaper article said wilderness groups made every effort to inform residents about meetings, but locals “just happen” to hear about meetings—usually a day before. Another NEPA study will need to be done, and she hopes area residents will participate. Also a lot of state land is involved with coal deposits and BLM cannot come up with comparable land to trade. Forests surrounding Jemez, and Valle Grande, have not helped Jemez economic development. Visitors come from Albuquerque and Rio Rancho and carry picnic lunches. But problems created, like increased vehicle traffic, have been tremendous.

**Question/Answer/Comment**

- Re BLM not allowing water development, does that involve heavy equipment? Primarily pipeline.
- Erosion control has been a consideration for many years, but not inside WSA. There are many roads, electric, water and gas lines. This does not meet the wilderness designation standards. Why go through the motions?

**Cecelia Abeyta, New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau**

She is a Native New Mexican and granddaughter of two ranchers. NMF&L has 60,000 members encompassing dairies, farms and ranches in NM. She tracked FLPMA from 1976 to 2003, and the RAC *Standards & Guidelines for Rangeland Health*. The human dimension was taken out of the *Guidelines* because it was supposedly adequately covered in NEPA. Initial review has shown that the human dimension has not been adequately analyzed for WSAs. Many of the WSAs proposed by wilderness organizations are outside BLM designation, so not covered by NEPA. A new NEPA/EIS needs to be conducted for Cabezón. The Farm Bureau wants joint partnership with county, state, Office of Cultural Affairs, Department of Agriculture, State Engineer, Environment Office, etc., to analyze the way of life in that area. The State Land Office is doing an EA with BLM in the process of finalization for Washington approval. She wants to be put on the mailing list to review that EA.

**Robert Cordova, Acequia Association of Northern NM, Middle Council of Governments (COG) Water Resource Board, Albuquerque**

Urge the RAC to contact and remain in communication with Steve Fisher to learn about the programs and strategies underway as part of regional planning. Polls have been taken and our results have been 180° different from previous speakers, but statistics can say anything we want them to. We are proceeding with backing on this regional water plan. These 40 ranchers are very important to that. Anything has potential. Where is the reality? Who pays for the infrastructure? If taxes go down as proposed, where does the money come from? It's a negative impact for the established economic processes. We don't need more cathedrals.

**Question/Answer/Comment**

- Would you please give us copies of your studies? He will invite them to the next COG Water Board Meeting, and put RAC in touch with someone to gain the studies. They used public input sessions throughout the state to develop goals and objectives.
- Does the regional water plan have to allow for potential wilderness? San Pedro Parks Wilderness, for example, is part of the uppermost watershed for the Rio Puerco—and they are looking at impact of overgrowth and mismanagement on water supply. Resident experts say that has negative impact. Without thinning, snow stays on tree canopies and evaporates rather than reaching the ground, and even when some reaches the ground, duff prevents its absorption.
- There's concern that it's way too late. We don't have any idea how these WSAs will affect water issues or sediment eroding into Elephant Butte Lake.

**Keller F. Davis, Native Farmer/Rancher, NM Cattlegrowers Association, NM Farm & Livestock Bureau, Bernalillo**

Sandoval County lost 9,000 acres to the Sandias, 95,000 acres to Valle Grande, etc. What's going to be left so taxpayers can support schools, etc.? Our tax base continues to shrink. We lock up tremendous reserves for potential coal gas and oil development. People who've lived there for the last 400 years have taken care of the land. Leave them alone to continue taking care of it. Let it look in 20 years like it looks now.

**Further comment from remaining guests**

- Wells established now are in WSAs, and we were told 2-3 weeks ago by BLM that development of community water systems is stopped. Jim Scarantino said if the Wilderness Coalition knew where that was happening, they would exclude that area from their proposal.
- There are more than 40 families, not 40 ranchers, in that area. Thousands of dollars and 20 years of planning for a water system will go down the tubes if it becomes wilderness.
- It is true that new pipeline and roads are not allowed if designated wilderness, but allowances could be made for particular areas. Under current status, if pipes follow an existing road or line, it probably could be done. This water line would run about 10-20 miles within the WSA.
- The NM Wilderness Coalition was believed to want no cattle grazing on public lands. Mr. Scarantino said that was not true. NEPA says grazing continues as established, with restrictions on maintaining land improvements. Residents are hauling water to stock now; they can't sustain business without and feel they're being forced out. This wilderness will hurt residents.
- A resident said the bar in San Luis is the only large meeting place with windows and doors, and there was no drinking at the meeting with NMWA.

Public comment period closed at 12.

### RAC reflections on the Cabezon presentations and public comment

- Need ways of dealing with all wilderness and WSAs. When a national policy is established, NMBLM can find solutions with RAC input.
- Difference between wilderness and conservation area may give direction for future.
- Work at grass roots and be willing to compromise. Share facts, dispel fears, avoid fights.
- It's become urban v. rural. Patience needed. Time scales vary among tribes, government, and rural folks.
- Limitations of the landscape designate it wilderness.
- Politics and leaders will change. Those wanting wilderness want to protect resources as the population expands. This is institutional protection to reinforce what current residents have intuitively protected.
- BLM inventoried and made recommendations. Unless it can be determined that BLM missed something or made a bad call, recommendations won't be changed.
- RAC could act as a forum to align the two groups.
- The Energy Subcommittee could explore wilderness issues.
- Recurring comment that aging population doesn't backpack, so protect it but don't lock it all up.
- Catron and Socorro are the fastest-growing counties in the US. Seventy-seven proposed subdivisions in Catron County since Ladron Wilderness was established in that area 3 1/2 years ago. Now long-time property owners want wilderness protection to maintain value of their land.
- Ranchers value wilderness and want protection too. This was too cut and dried, and people felt left out of the process. Write in options to help ranchers agree—special permits for maintaining water lines, one road instead of numerous branches, etc.

### **FIELD OFFICE REPORTS** (Attachment 8)

Field Office management reported as a panel in dialogue with the RAC.

#### Concerning implementation of the *Roads & Trails Guidelines*:

- Dwayne Sykes said an instruction memo on handling OHV designations, inventories, designating new OHV routes, etc., was sent to NM FOs in September. Washington picked up and distributed the memo to all BLM states, and a number of requests for using the guidelines came in.
- Farmington designated 13 road management units, and fundamentally shifted use from 95% open to 95% limited. Their goal is site-specific collaboratives.
- Ed Singleton is working with Farmington and Rio Arriba County to establish a 14<sup>th</sup> road unit that crosses county lines and deals with O&G traffic. They have a \$25,000 grant to set guidelines for road management in the context of global transportation planning. Las Cruces is sending a planner to work with Albuquerque. The FO hopes to finish mapping Albuquerque area roads by 2007.
- Carlsbad FO has made road mapping a priority. Wilderness volunteers have offered to help. However, volunteers in the past brought about controversy and cause to redo. (See Ed Roberson's report.) A forum is planned for January 23. They closed some roads during hunting season. Roswell closes roads through designation rather than inventory (for which there are no funds right now.)
- Las Cruces continues its road inventory with aerial photo technology and ground proofing. Statewide standards for inventory were initiated. Challenge is that land use plans historically did not designate road use, and planners never got around to designation after the plan. Now and in future, critical areas are included in land use plans.
- Taos FO is working with USFS to post signs (redesigned for permanence) and agree on designations. They are using maps to inventory; and working with student aids to inventory high use areas outside Espanola. They are collaborating with Rio Arriba County on a complementary transportation management plan. Forecast a comprehensive road map about 2007.

- Socorro roads are open unless designated closed. Data is ready for the draft EIS. People make roads where they shouldn't, and sign roads closed that shouldn't be—so enforcement is essential. There is increasing use by urban citizens with little knowledge. The FO does workshops and public meetings. RAC can help Socorro FO address growth by identifying those using the land and educating them.
- Farmington is shifting, as recommended by the RAC, from unrestricted to limited access, allowing citizens to decide what of the 5% remaining should be open to OHVs. They will go through the 13 units on a priority basis.
- Roswell is designating and signing existing roads to provide better enforcement.
- Education and solutions at state level are vital to success, for example, the CA sticker program.
- Nothing will change without enforcement.
- Kids on big 4-wheelers are outside enforcement. Need alternatives and peer pressure. Collaborating with motorcycle owners and organizations for self-enforcement.
- Socorro FO and Don Tripp's committee will work on involving the public in planning. Kate referred to the *Scoping Report* (Attachment 9), which emphasizes collaboration. But change does not come easy. RAC can help identify and collaborate with representatives of the public, and give feedback and recommendations as Socorro moves on with its RMP. The FO's web site accepts public comment, but that may not be what works for the public.
- It was agreed that it is most critical for the RAC to advise Rich as he proceeds to Washington, but actively participate in public meetings and workshops—in person or by recommending appropriate participants.
- Format of public scoping and comment meetings may be nonproductive, leading to more polarization. Advice on structuring meetings would help.
- Staff would like closer working relationships RAC members, and asked them to call and ask about issues, stop in FOs, bring groups, take part.

#### Suggestions for interaction with RAC:

- Roswell sends cover letters for documents to the RAC with the understanding that they can receive the document if requested.
- RAC will have a website ASAP—with minutes, bios, photos and whatever members and staff request.
- Socorro's issue briefs are helpful. Send them out with pre-meeting packets. FOs could email or mail briefs directly to RAC. (Not all RAC has email.)
- Ed Singleton asked to hear any comments RAC receives about issues in Placitas, where there are influential owners, Shell pipeline, Indian horses crossing boundaries, etc.
- Might be good to arrange time at RAC meetings for more direct interaction.
- Taos is establishing a newsletter.
- Kate would like to have comments on her RMP from RAC members outside her area, to get a sense from the RAC as a whole. The RAC could develop a mechanism for that.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Urban Interface/Community Involvement Subcommittee**

- Recommend a RAC education session on the RMP process, including steps, timing, where public becomes involved, etc.
- Identify further issues.

### **Rangelands Subcommittee**

(Subcommittee "homework")



- Find out priorities on impaired streams.
- Call FOs for P-J removal plans, budget, expectations.
- Get information on biomass and total maximum daily loads from NM Environment Department.
- Meet with Joe Stell about where to go for estimated water losses and ground water reduction associated with P-J encroachment.
- O&G revenue generated since 1921 has been divided into 50% state, 40% Bureau of Reclamation, 10% federal general fund, 0% to BLM. That needs to change.

They recommended that:

- BLM explore all available avenues to facilitate approval of ranchers on proposed and funded conservation factors that will reduce fuel loads.
- Funding and process be set so that a permittee who proposes a good idea for range improvement can go ahead with it. Issues for any project are NEPA compliance, archaeological clearance and timelines, which call for budget. Funding was thought to be available from other sources. Discussion followed. Dennis will write a draft and get it to members for consideration before next meeting.

**Energy Subcommittee**

- Focus on issues where we can have an effect.

(Subcommittees can receive travel allotments for meetings between RAC meetings.)

**AGENDA PLANNING**

Discussion followed on where and when to schedule upcoming meetings, and meeting focus. Sites discussed for March/April were Socorro and Farmington. Linda said there is more opportunity for meaningful impact on the RMP in Socorro because of the planning stage it's in. The RAC might help preclude polarization, which has already occurred in Farmington. Therefore, Socorro was chosen for the next meeting.

**Socorro April 2-4, 2003**

- Resource management plans
  - Overview
  - How alternatives are developed
  - New ideas for collaboration
  - Citizen alternatives
  - Lessons learned from Farmington
  - Socorro RMP
  - Public comment on RMPs
- BLM provides issues
- Website
- Subcommittee work
- Nominations for new RAC members
- FO reports
- Encourage public comment—press release should note that RAC is talking about Socorro's RMP
- Field trip to include wilderness area, watershed, OHV, El Camino Real, salt cedar at Bosque
- John Hand and Don Tripp will work with the FO to set up field trip

**Ruidoso, June date to be decided at March meeting**

Watersheds

Range issues  
Biomass  
Sid Goodlow's ranch

## MEETING ASSESSMENT

### **What worked?**

- Group response to public comment period was thoughtful and useful
- Focus on issues and specifics was helpful
- Instructional, educational, enlightening, particularly on wilderness
- Group able to change agenda as needed
- Round tables
- Productive
- Fighting to determine new issues, and set stage for BLM to bring issues to RAC
- Worthwhile but downtime
- More and more impressed with how this group works
- As sounding board we give something to BLM
- Identified 2-3 things to work on
- Meeting turned out well
- Bottom line is being useful to BLM
- Introspection was valuable

### **What didn't work**

- Head banging on first day, *ad nauseum*
- First day wasted
- RAC members have only 15-18 meetings to serve and didn't do anything at this one
- Need one issue BLM wants input on to approach in-depth
- Still want to know what RAC purpose is and whether it is useful
- No more direction than when we started

Meeting adjourned.

/s/ Robyn Tierney  
RAC Chairperson